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Building interior walls

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Q: My house was built in 1950, and its exterior walls are made of cement block. When I removed some interior walls while renovating the bedroom, I noticed that the studs were spaced 24 inches on center. When I install new walls, should I keep that spacing? I plan to cover them with drywall.

— Brad, East Peoria, IL

A: Tom Silva replies: Codes generally allow 24-inch on-center spacing for studs in interior nonbearing walls, and under certain circumstances even for load-bearing walls. But I don't see why you'd want to do it, even if you can. You don't save much money in materials or much time in installation, and the finished wall is likely to flex if you lean on it. I build interior walls with 2x4 studs spaced 16 inches on center and cover them with at least ½-inch-thick drywall. They're stiffer and more solid-feeling than anything built with 24-inch spacing.

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